

**RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF Wednesday, October 26, 2011 MEETING**

Board Members Present: Jerome Williams, Acting Chairperson; Stephen Durkee; Michael Lewis; Maureen Martin, Anna Liebenow; Mayor Scott Avedisian; and Margaret Holland McDuff.

Absent: Thomas Deller

Also Present: Charles Odingbe, Chief Executive Officer; Todd Gleason, (Outside Counsel); Andrew Prescott, (Outside Counsel); Ellen Mandly; and other members of RIPTA's staff and members of the public whose names are on the sign-in sheet.

Prior to the start of the meeting Board member Maureen Martin requested a moment of silence on behalf of bus operator Andy Santagata who took ill while in service and had passed away. Ms. Martin had kind words about Mr. Santagata, a very well liked individual and extremely competent operator. Mr. Williams and Ms. Martin expressed condolences on behalf of the RIPTA Board of Directors to the family of Andy Santagata.

There was a moment of silence for Andy Santagata.

Agenda Item 1: Vote on September 27, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Jerome Williams called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and said Thomas Deller could not attend the meeting due to illness and said he would be acting as Chair. Mr. Williams then introduced RIPTA's new Outside Counsel Todd Gleason from the firm of Hinckley, Allen, Snyder and welcomed him. Mr. Gleason greeted the Board members and thanked them for the opportunity to the Authority.

Mr. Williams asked if the Board members had an opportunity to review the minutes of the meeting held September 27, 2011. The Board members indicated that they had and Ms. Mandly noted a correction she made regarding Board members listed as present. Mr. Durkee then made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting as corrected. Mayor Avedisian seconded the motion. The minutes of the meeting held September 27, 2011 were unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 2: Public Comment

Mr. Williams asked for public comments and reminded those present that this is a time for comment not debate, and generally Board members will not offer a response.

Abel Collins of the Sierra Club and the RIPTA Riders spoke first and said all present in the audience today want RIPTA service expanded, not cut and he offered to help in any way needed to make this

happen. He then referenced remarks made by Senator Tassoni at the September meeting and alleged that there had been no follow-up on the Senator's suggestion that RIPTA ask for additional funding at the state house and with one-on-one meetings with legislators. Mr. Williams interjected to inform Mr. Collins that this was not true as the CEO and the members of the executive committee have had multiple meetings with the Governor's offices and elected officials and will continue to do so.

Mr. Collins finished his remarks by saying it is the duty of the Board to fill the gaps in the budget without making service cuts and asking that RIPTA hold off on choose-up cuts.

Paul Harrington, President of the Amalgamated Transit Union spoke next and contradicted a recent article by Bruce Landis in the Providence Journal by saying there are no labor tensions and that the circumstances reported in the article were unrelated to ATU or its members. Mr. Harrington said the article was disappointing and very upsetting to him because he feels it questions their integrity.

Next Mr. Harrington spoke against any service cuts because this will hurt RIPTA's passengers particularly college students who ride under the UPass Program. He said he was confused regarding discussions on service cuts at last month's meeting, but regardless, does not want any.

Mr. Harrington remarked on the recurring procurement on the agenda for Genuine Webb Brake Drums and said purchasing new brake drums would be “outsourcing”. He believes Authority employees are qualified to do work on brake drums and asked that work on brake drums be done in-house.

Finally Mr. Harrington remarked about lost service and described a high occurrence of events of lost service since April and said this was due to getting rid of “stand-bys” and work rule changes and this lost service adversely affects the elderly and disabled. Mr. Harrington said the current deficit is self imposed and asked that no service be cut.

Joseph Cole a RIPTA bus operator spoke next and also discussed the issue of standbys saying this position is important and likened it to a relief pitcher in baseball. He said service has been eliminated and alleged 10 buses were off the road. Mr. Cole believes the money is there to put the service on the street and we need it now especially with winter coming. He finished by saying he too disliked the article in the Providence Journal.

Patricia Robb a member of RIPTA Riders and the occupy Providence said she has friends and family that cannot afford to have a car and also chose not to drive due to pollution. She said bus service is needed to get to work and social activities. She added that it is also unsafe for women to be walking and she feels safer on the bus. Ms.

Robb supports Mr. Collins comments about going to the State House to request more money.

Frank Plutzner a RIPTA employee commented on the brake drum issue and described how the brake work had been done in the past. He feels RIPTA employees should be doing this work in-house.

Elaine Heapner spoke next and said she teaches adult education and English as a second language and her students are highly dependent on RIPTA as is she. She said she uses the bus daily for work and social engagements and she is the typical face of RIPTA.

At this point for the members in the audience who may not know Mr. Williams noted that many if not all Board members attended multiple public hearings held this summer regarding potential service cuts and he stressed what the members have reiterated at those hearings, and previous Board meetings: the RIPTA Board does not want service cuts.

Jared Paul an independent artist who is a RIPTA rider and a part of the occupy Providence group said he chose to give up his car in 2001 and rely solely on public transit for economic reasons and also to have a smaller carbon footprint up until now he has been able to get where he needs to go using his bike and RIPTA. He said he depends on RIPTA especially now that he has no car and he fully supports public transit and wants to help keep it intact.

John St. Lawrence, also from occupy Providence spoke next and expressed dismay that the rail project in Warwick had received funding but not public transportation – he said this is what is wrong with America. He listed certain investments made by the EDC that he is also against. He said every country in the world funds its public transit and America needs to do the same to guard against global warming. He too is trying to lesson his carbon footprint.

Randall Rose from the RIPTA Riders spoke and acknowledged the support here today from those attending as part of occupy Providence and said RIPTA Riders have similar concerns. He said the public hearings need to be held in places that attract more real decision makers and suggested holding future public hearings at the State House so legislative leaders attended. Mr. Williams interjected that all RIPTA Board members attended the recent public hearings and many attended multiple locations. Additionally, Mr. Williams said many state and local legislators attended the hearings and also sent in letters directly to RIPTA.

Mr. Rose continued saying his group is tired of excuses and wants better funding for public transit now and he wants to take this conversation to the State House. He and his group will be reaching out to others who support transit and trying to get more conversation on funding for public transit at the State House.

Agenda Item 3: Chief Executive Officer's Report

Mr. Williams asked Mr. Odingbe to give his CEO Report and offered him the opportunity to respond and clarify to statements made during public comments. Mr. Odingbe said he would like to remark on comments made by Mr. Harrington regarding the outsourcing of the brake drums. Mr. Odingbe consulted staff while public comments were being made and they confirmed that it has been the practice for many years to purchase new brake drums and not recondition them. He said no action has been taken to change the status quo.

Mr. Lewis asked if we the Authority had previously reconditioned brake drums. Roger Mencarini, Director of Procurement responded that a decision was made at least 5 years ago to buy the brake drums due to cost and safety factors. He said this procurement is for a recurring inventory item and this is new 5-year contract.

Next Mr. Odingbe responded to the comments made regarding lost service and said he did not know where the data cited during the comments was coming from, then asked that it be noted in the minutes that currently we have approximately 26 bus operators out long-term, 7 Ride operators out long-term, and 11 mechanics out long-term sick and these are open jobs that he cannot fill. Also, each morning he receives a report on lost service (he will make these reports available to the Board prior to the next Board meeting) and only twice in the last two months has there been a report to him on lost service. One instance was because no bus was available and one not enough staff.

Next Mr. Odimgbe noted the new format for the CEO Report which is now divided into departments so you can easily track costs and trends by department. The ATMS and ARRA reports are per usual. He asked the Board members to let him know if they had comments or questions on any of these reports.

Mr. Williams asked about the timetable of the ATMS project relative to factory acceptance testing. Mr. Odimgbe said there was some question regarding open architecture, but he will check with Paul LaFlamme and get back to Mr. Williams.

Mr. Lewis noted that on the Ride Program in the KPI's the number of preventable and non-preventable accidents appears to have doubled in the past year and asked for an explanation. Mr. Odimgbe responded that the accidents have not necessarily gone up rather we have placed more categories under accidents that are preventable. He described the changes to the definitions.

Ms. Liebenow asked a question regarding the manpower report noting a significant difference between budget versus actual. Mr. Odimgbe said that historically all open budgeted positions were filled, but approximately a month ago he issued an adjustment. He said we are working hard to get these positions filled and the employees trained. He said the issue of understaffing is chronic.

Ms. Martin asked a follow-up question about leaving some positions unfilled saying she understands some were left open due to budgetary issues but she wondered what the case was regarding those who have retired. Additionally last month she asked about incentives for early retirees and wondered what the status was on a retiree incentive program. Mr. Odingbe responded that we had been making good progress working with the unions on some of the concession issues; however most of the strides made were then pulled off the table by the union. At this point he has nothing new to report except that he is working with Local 808 on a new contract and on budget deficit issues and that is going well. He said he would make additional remarks in executive session.

Mayor Avedisian remarked that unfilled budget positions will ultimately help the bottom line each month. Margaret Holland McDuff asked if the unfilled positions impact overtime and Mr. Odingbe said it depends on the position. Next Ms. McDuff said the KPI's are a good monthly and year-to-year comparison, but the information would be more useful if it were to be aligned to a benchmark or set of goals. Mr. Odingbe agreed and explained there was no benchmark or goals because prior to his joining RIPTA no KPI's were in place. He said the current KPI's are a work in progress and currently we are just assembling the raw data to develop a baseline, which will be tied into a benchmark and goals and industry standards in future years.

Mr. Williams asked that Mr. Odingbe respond to the Board member

after the meeting and verify the numbers regarding lost service. Mr. Odimgbe said he would get that information to the Board and added for the record that as of today he has 62 bus operators out sick, 10 van operators out sick on the Rlde side and when you talk about lost service – this is where the problem originates.

Agenda Item 4: IFB 12-04 Webb Brake Drums

Roger Mencarini discussed this recurring procurement for Webb Brake Drums and gave the details of the bid process contained in the board report form. He said the Board is requested to award a contract to North American Bus Industries of Delaware to supply and deliver genuine Webb Brake Drums to be used on our bus and trolley fleets. The estimated annual cost is \$120,000. This is a one-year contract with up to four annual renewals and as stated earlier replaces the previous expired year contract for new brake drums.

The Board members asked some questions regarding the brake drums and past practice and Mr. Odimgbe said he would look into the issue further, but assured the Board that for today's vote no changes have been made from the existing *modus operandi*. Mr. Mencarini said he can pull the usage and cost history for the last contract.

Following this discussion Michael Lewis made the motion to award the contract to supply and deliver “Genuine” Webb Brake Drums to North American Bus Industries of Delaware at a cost of about

\$120,000 annually. Mayor Avedisian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 5: IFB 12-05 Computer Room Air Conditioning Unit

Roger Mencarini discussed the procurement for the Computer Room Air Conditioning Unit which is needed because the current unit has exceeded its useful life span. Mr. Mencarini described the details of the bid process contained in the board report form then said staff recommends the award of the contract to CAM HVAC of Smithfield, RI to supply and deliver an air conditioning unit for the computer room at 269 Melrose Street. The cost of the contract is \$56,460.

Following this discussion Michael Lewis made the motion to award the contract to supply and deliver the air conditioning unit to CAM HVAC of Smithfield, RI at a cost of \$56,460. Steve Durkee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 6: Board Committee Assignments

Mr. Williams said he would table this agenda item but if there is any interest on serving on a particular committee, please contact Tom Deller or Ellen Mandly as this will be on the November agenda for discussion and action.

Agenda Item 7: 2012 Board Meeting Schedule

Mr. Williams moved on to the next agenda item, the proposed Board meetings for 2012 calendar year. Ms. Mandly commented that she had moved the date of the April meeting from the third Monday to the fourth due to President's Day and school vacation week; other holidays are accounted for as normal.

Mr. Lewis asked Ms. Mandly to confirm whether the number of the building is 265 or 269 and adjust accordingly on the meeting schedule and on our website and Secretary of State Site public postings. Mr. Durkee then moved that the 2012 Board meeting schedule be approved as presented. Mr. Lewis seconded the motion and the meeting schedule was unanimously approved.

Mr. Williams asked Ms. Mandly to email the approved agenda to the Board members after the meeting.

Agenda Item 8: Executive Session Pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) for Discussions and/or action related to Collective Bargaining

Mr. Lewis read the law to convene an executive session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) for Discussions and/or Action related to Collective Bargaining and made the motion to adjourn to executive session and Margaret Holland McDuff seconded the motion. A roll

call vote was taken and the motion to convene to executive session passed unanimously.

Following the Board's return to open session Mayor Avedisian made a motion to seal the minutes of the executive session. Mr. Durkee seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

At this point Michael Lewis left the meeting.

Agenda Item 9: FY 2012 Deficit Reduction Initiatives

Following the Boards return to open session Mr. Williams asked Charles Odimgbe to give a brief update on next steps in regards to deficit reduction initiatives. Mr. Odimgbe said he believes we are close to agreement with Local 808 on the deficit reduction plan and Andrew Prescott will handle final touches however negotiations and conversations with Amalgamated Transit Union 618/618A have broken down.

Mr. Williams said the CEO and the executive committee will attempt to meet with ATU within the next couple of days to try to restart the deficit reduction initiatives negotiations. Steve Durkee made a motion that agenda item # 9 - FY 2012 Deficit Reduction Initiatives be tabled until members of the Board have an opportunity to have more conversation with ATU 618. Mayor Avedisian seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 10: Adjournment

Mr. Williams asked for a motion to adjourn. Mayor Avedisian made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Holland McDuff seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen M. Mandly

Recording Secretary